



**United States
Department of
Agriculture**

**Agricultural
Marketing
Service**

**Poultry
Division**

United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry

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FOREWORD

These classes, standards, and grades have been developed and are promulgated pursuant to the authorities contained in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, as amended, (7 U.S.C. 1621 *et seq.*). The voluntary USDA poultry grading program operates under these classes, standards, and grades and the poultry grading regulations. The voluntary program provides for interested parties a national grading service based on official U.S. classes, standards, and grades for poultry. The costs involved in furnishing this grading program are paid by the user of the service.

The grading program, the Regulations Governing the Grading of Poultry Products and Rabbit Products, and the United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry establish a basis for quality and price relationship and enable more orderly marketing. Consumers can purchase officially graded product with the confidence of receiving quality in accordance with the official identification.

Effective December 4, 1995, the United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry were removed from the Code of Federal Regulations (7 CFR Part 70) and are now maintained by the Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture as AMS 70.200 *et seq.*

This document contains the classes, standards, and grades which are the most current to date. All changes in these sections are enumerated in the bracketed footnotes following the applicable sections.

United States Classes, Standards, and Grades for Poultry

United States Department of Agriculture
Agricultural Marketing Service
Poultry Division

AMS 70.200 *et seq.*

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Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1621-1627.

Source: 41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976, unless otherwise noted. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981.

United States Classes of Ready-to-Cook Poultry

§70.200 General.

The provisions of AMS §§70.200 through 70.206 apply to individual carcasses of ready-to-cook poultry in determining the kind of poultry and its class. The kinds of poultry are as follows: Chickens, turkeys, ducks, geese, guineas, and pigeons.

§70.201 Chickens.

The following are the various classes of chickens:

(a) *Rock Cornish game hen or Cornish game hen.* A Rock Cornish game hen or Cornish game hen is a young immature chicken (usually 5 to 6 weeks of age), weighing not more than 2 pounds ready-to-cook weight, which was prepared from a Cornish chicken or the progeny of a Cornish chicken crossed with another breed of chicken.

(b) *Rock Cornish fryer, roaster, or hen.* A Rock Cornish fryer, roaster, or hen is the progeny of a cross between a purebred Cornish and a purebred Rock chicken, without regard to the weight of the carcass involved; however, the term "fryer," "roaster," or "hen," shall apply only if the carcasses are from birds with ages and characteristics that qualify them for such designation under paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section.

(c) *Broiler or fryer.* A broiler or fryer is a young chicken (usually under 13 weeks of age), of either sex, that is tender-meated with soft, pliable, smooth-textured skin and flexible breastbone cartilage.

(d) *Roaster or roasting chicken.* A bird of this class is a young chicken (usually 3 to 5 months of age), of either sex, that is tender-meated with soft, pliable, smooth-textured skin and breastbone cartilage that may be somewhat less flexible than that of a broiler or fryer.

(e) *Capon.* A capon is a surgically unsexed male chicken (usually under 8 months of age) that is tender-meated with soft, pliable, smooth-textured skin.

(f) *Hen, fowl, or baking or stewing chicken.* A bird of this class is a mature female chicken (usually more than 10 months of age) with meat less tender than that of a roaster or roasting chicken and nonflexible breastbone tip.

(g) *Cock or rooster.* A cock or rooster is a mature male chicken with coarse skin, toughened and darkened meat, and hardened breastbone tip.

§70.202 Turkeys.

The following are the various classes of turkeys:

(a) *Fryer-roaster turkey.* A fryer-roaster turkey is a young immature turkey (usually under 16 weeks of age), of either sex, that is tender-meated with soft, pliable, smooth-textured skin, and flexible breastbone cartilage.

(b) *Young turkey.* A young turkey is a turkey (usually under 8 months of age) that is tender-meated with soft, pliable smooth-textured skin, and breastbone cartilage that is somewhat less flexible than in a fryer-roaster turkey. Sex designation is optional.

(c) *Yearling turkey.* A yearling turkey is a fully matured turkey (usually under 15 months of age) that is reasonably tender-meated and with reasonably smooth-textured skin. Sex designation is optional.

(d) *Mature turkey or old turkey (hen or tom).* A mature or old turkey is an old turkey of either sex (usually in excess of 15 months of age) with coarse skin and toughened flesh.

(e) For labeling purposes, the designation of sex within the class name is optional, and the two classes of young turkeys may be grouped and designated as "young turkeys."

§70.203 Ducks.

The following are the various classes of ducks:

(a) *Broiler duckling or fryer duckling.* A broiler duckling or a fryer duckling is a young duck (usually under 8 weeks of age), of either sex, that is tender-meated and has a soft bill and a soft windpipe.

(b) *Roaster duckling.* A roaster duckling is a young duck (usually under 16 weeks of age), of either sex, that is tender-meated and has a bill that is not completely hardened and a windpipe that is easily dented.

(c) *Mature duck or old duck.* A mature duck or an old duck is a duck (usually over 6 months of age), of either sex, with toughened flesh, hardened bill, and hardened windpipe.

§70.204 Geese.

The following are the various classes of geese:

(a) *Young goose.* A young goose may be of either sex, is tender-meated, and has a windpipe that is easily dented.

(b) *Mature goose or old goose.* A mature goose or old goose may be of either sex and has toughened flesh and hardened windpipe.

§70.205 Guineaes.

The following are the various classes of guineas:

(a) *Young guinea.* A young guinea may be of either sex, is tender-meated, and has a flexible breastbone cartilage.

(b) *Mature guinea or old guinea.* A mature guinea or an old guinea may be of either sex, has toughened flesh, and a hardened breastbone.

§70.206 Pigeons.

The following are the various classes of pigeons:

(a) *Squab*. A squab is a young, immature pigeon of either sex, and is extra tender-meated.

(b) *Pigeon*. A pigeon is a mature pigeon of either sex, with coarse skin and toughened flesh.

United States Standards for Quality of Ready-to-Cook Poultry and Specified Poultry Food Products

§70.210 General.

(a) The United States standards for quality contained herein are applicable to individual carcasses of ready-to-cook poultry, to parts of ready-to-cook poultry as described in paragraph (e) of this section, and to individual units of specified poultry food products.

(b) Carcasses, parts, or poultry food products found to be unsound, unwholesome, or otherwise unfit for human food in whole or in part, shall not be given any of the quality designations specified in the United States standards for quality contained herein.

(c) In interpreting the respective requirements specified in AMS §§70.210 through 70.222 for A quality, B quality, and C quality, the intensity, aggregate area involved, and locations of

- (1) discolorations (whether or not caused by dressing operations);
- (2) bruises;
- (3) exposed flesh (resulting from cuts, tears, and missing skin);
- (4) pinfeathers; and
- (5) freezing defects,

as such defects individually, or in combination, detract from the general appearance, shall be considered in determining the particular quality of an individual carcass or part.

(d) A ready-to-cook carcass which has a defect may be graded after the defective portion has been removed. The fact that a portion has been removed, will not be considered in determining the quality of the balance of the carcass if the remaining portion of the carcass is to be disjointed and packed as parts or used in the fabrication of poultry food products. Poultry parts which have been properly cut as described in paragraph (e) of this section may be graded after they have been cut from the carcass, if the class is known and the parts are not misshapen or have nearly the same appearance as prior to cutting from the carcass.

(e) The standards of quality are applicable to poultry parts cut in the manner described in this section. Similar parts cut in a manner other than described in this section may be grade identified only when approved by the Administrator upon a determination that the labeling for such parts accurately describes the product. Requests for such approval shall be made to the national supervisor.

(1) "Breasts" shall be separated from the back at the shoulder joint and by a cut running backward and downward from that point along the junction of the vertebral and sternal ribs. The ribs may be removed from the breasts, and the breasts may be cut along the breastbone to make two approximately equal halves; or the wishbone portion, as described in paragraph (e)(3) of this section, may be removed before cutting the remainder along the breastbone to make three parts. Pieces cut in this manner may be substituted for lighter or heavier pieces for exact-weight-making purposes, and the package may contain two or more of such parts without affecting the appropriateness of the labeling as e.g., "chicken breasts." Neck skin shall not be included with the breasts, except that "turkey breasts" may include neck skin up to the whisker.

(2) "Breasts with ribs" shall be separated from the back at the junction of the vertebral ribs and back. Breasts with ribs may be cut along the breastbone to make two approximately equal halves; or the wishbone portion, as described in paragraph (e)(3) of this section, may be removed before cutting the remainder along the breastbone to make three parts. Pieces cut in this manner may be substituted for lighter or heavier pieces for exact weight-making purposes, and the package may contain two or more of such parts without affecting the appropriateness of the labeling as "breasts with ribs." Neck skin shall not be included, except that "turkey breasts with ribs" may include neck skin up to the whisker.

(3) "Wishbones" (Pulley Bones), with covering muscle and skin tissue, shall be severed from the breast approximately halfway between the end of the wishbone (huncleberry) and from point of the breastbone (cranial process of the sternal crest) to a point where the wishbone joins the shoulder. Neck skin shall not be included with the wishbone.

(4) "Drumsticks" shall be separated from the thigh by a cut through the knee joint (femorotibial and patellar joint) and from the hock joint (tarsal joint).

(5) "Thighs" shall be disjointed at the hip joint and may include the pelvic meat, but shall not include the pelvic bones. Back skin shall not be included.

(6) "Legs" shall include the whole leg, i.e., the thigh and the drumstick, whether jointed or disjointed. Back skin shall not be included.

(7) "Wings" shall include the entire wing with all muscle and skin tissue intact, except that the wing tip may be removed.

(8) "Backs" that are officially identified shall meet the applicable provisions of AMS §§70.220, 70.221, and 70.222.

(9) "Halves" are prepared by making a full-length back and breast split of an eviscerated poultry carcass so as to produce approximately equal right and left sides.

(10) "Front poultry halves" shall include the full breast with corresponding back portion, and may or may not include wings, wing meat, or portions of wing.

(11) "Rear poultry halves" shall include both legs and adjoining portion of the back attached.

(12) "Quarters" consist of the entire eviscerated poultry carcass, which has been cut into four equal parts, but excluding the neck.

(13) "Breast quarter" consists of half a breast with the wing and a portion of the back attached.

(14) "Breast quarter without wing" consists of a front quarter of a poultry carcass, from which the wing has been removed.

(15) "Leg quarter" consists of a poultry thigh and drumstick, with a portion of the back attached.

(16) "Thigh with back portion" consists of a poultry thigh with back portion attached.

(17) "Legs with pelvic bone" consists of a poultry leg with adhering meat and skin and pelvic bone.

(18) "Wing drummette" consists of the humerus (first portion) of a poultry wing with adhering skin and meat attached.

[41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976; 41 FR 24694, June 18, 1976. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977 and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981, and amended at 51 FR 17281, May 9, 1986; 60 FR 6640, Feb. 2, 1995]

Standards for Quality of Ready-to-Cook Poultry

§70.220 A Quality.

(a) *Conformation.* The carcass or part is free of deformities that detract from its appearance or that affect the normal distribution of flesh. Slight deformities, such as slightly curved or dented breastbones and slightly curved backs, may be present.

(b) *Fleshing.* The carcass has a well developed covering of flesh considering the kind, class, and part.

(1) The breast is moderately long and deep, and has sufficient flesh to give it a rounded appearance with the flesh carrying well up to the crest of the breastbone along its entire length.

(2) The leg is well fleshed and moderately thick and wide at the knee and hip joint area, and has a well-rounded, plump appearance with the flesh carrying well down toward the hock and upward to the hip joint area.

(3) The drumstick is well fleshed and moderately thick and wide at the knee joint, and has a well-rounded, plump appearance with the flesh carrying well down toward the hock.

(4) The thigh is well to moderately fleshed.

(5) The wing is well to moderately fleshed.

(c) *Fat covering.* The carcass or part, considering the kind, class, and part, has a well-developed layer of fat in the skin. The fat is well distributed so that there is a noticeable amount of fat in the skin in the areas between the heavy feather tracts.

(d) *Defeathering.* The carcass or part has a clean appearance, especially on the breast. The carcass or part is free of protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, and hairs.

(e) *Exposed flesh.* The requirements contained in this section are applicable to exposed flesh resulting from cuts, tears, and missing skin.

(1) The carcass may have exposed flesh due to cuts, tears, and missing skin, provided the aggregate area of all exposed flesh does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in	1 1/2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in	3 in.

(2) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have exposed flesh due to cuts, tears, and missing skin, provided the aggregate area of all exposed flesh does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1/2 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in	3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in	1 1/2 in.

(3) Other parts may have exposed flesh due to cuts, tears, and missing skin, provided the aggregate area of all exposed flesh does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	Parts
None	2 lb	1/4 in .
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in .
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in .
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in .

(4) For all parts, trimming of the skin along the edge is allowed, provided that at least 75 percent of the normal skin cover associated with the part remains attached, and further provided that the remaining skin uniformly covers the outer surface in a manner that does not detract from the appearance of the part.

(5) In addition, the carcass or part may have cuts or tears that do not expand or significantly expose flesh, provided the aggregate length of all such cuts and tears does not exceed a length tolerance using the dimensions listed in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate length permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs, and parts	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/4 in	1 1/2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1/2 in	3 in.

(f) *Disjointed and broken bones and missing parts.*

(1) Parts are free of broken bones. Parts are free of disjointed bones except that thighs with back portions, legs, or leg quarters may have the femur disjointed from the hip joint. The carcass is free of broken bones and has not more than one disjointed bone.

(2) The wing tips may be removed at the joint, and in the case of ducks and geese, the parts of the wing beyond the second joint may be removed, if removed at the joint and both wings are so treated. The tail may be removed at the base.

(3) Cartilage separated from the breastbone is not considered as a disjointed or broken bone.

(g) *Discolorations.* The requirements contained in this section are applicable to discolorations of the skin and flesh of poultry, and the flesh of skinless poultry, as defined in the definitions in the regulations 7 CFR Part 70.1.

(1) The carcass, parts derived from the carcass, or large carcass parts may have slight discolorations, provided the discolorations do not detract from the appearance of the product.

(2) The carcass may have lightly shaded areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table. Evidence of incomplete bleeding, such as more than an occasional slightly reddened feather follicle, is not permitted.

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lb	3/4 in	1 1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 in	2 in
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 1/2 in	2 1/2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	2 in	3 in.

(3) The carcass may have moderately shaded areas of discoloration and discolorations due to flesh bruising, provided:

- (i) They are not on the breast or legs, except for the area adjacent to the hock joint;
- (ii) They are free of clots; and
- (iii) They may not exceed an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Hock area of legs	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lb	1/4 in	5/8 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	3/4 in	1 1/4 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1 in	1 1/2 in.

(4) Parts, other than large carcass parts, may have lightly shaded areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table. Evidence of incomplete bleeding, such as more than an occasional slightly reddened feather follicle, is not permitted.

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	Parts
None	2 lb	1/2 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1 1/4 in.

(5) Parts, other than large carcass parts, may have moderately shaded areas of discoloration and discolorations due to flesh bruising, provided:

- (i) They are not on the breast or legs, except for the area adjacent to the hock joint;
- (ii) They are free of clots; and
- (iii) They may not exceed an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	Parts
None	2 lb	1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/8 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	5/8 in.

(6) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have lightly shaded areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area of all discolorations does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/4 in	1 1/2 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 in	2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1 1/4 in	2 1/2 in.

(7) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have moderately shaded areas of discoloration and discolorations due to flesh bruising, provided:

- (i) They are not on the breast or legs, except for the area adjacent to the hock joint;
- (ii) They are free of clots; and
- (iii) They may not exceed an aggregate area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Hock area of legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1/4 in	1/2 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	3/8 in	3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1/2 in	1 in.
Over 16 lb	None	5/8 in	1 1/4 in.

(h) *Freezing defects.* With respect to consumer packaged poultry, parts, or specified poultry food products, the carcass, part, or specified poultry food product is practically free from defects which result from handling or occur during freezing or storage. The following defects are permitted if they, alone or in combination, detract only very slightly from the appearance of the carcass, part, or specified poultry food product:

(1) Slight darkening over the back and drumsticks, provided the frozen bird or part has a generally bright appearance;

(2) Occasional pockmarks due to drying of the inner layer of skin (derma) (however, none may exceed the area of a circle 1/8 inch in diameter for poultry weighing 6 pounds or less and 1/4 inch in diameter for poultry weighing over 6 pounds);

(3) Occasional small areas of clear, pinkish, or reddish colored ice.

(4) Occasional small areas of dehydration, white to light grey in color, on the flesh of skinless carcasses, parts, or specified poultry food products not to exceed the permitted aggregate area for discolorations as provided in AMS §70.220(g).

(i) *Backs.* A quality backs shall meet all applicable provisions of this section pertaining to parts, and shall include the meat contained on the ilium (oyster), pelvic meat and skin and vertebral ribs and scapula with meat and skin.

[41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981, and amended at 51 FR 17281, May 9, 1986; 60 FR 6640, Feb. 2, 1995]

§70.221 B Quality.

(a) *Conformation.* The carcass or part may have moderate deformities, such as a dented, curved, or crooked breast, crooked back or misshapen legs or wings, which do not materially affect the distribution of flesh or the appearance of the carcass or part.

(b) *Fleshing.* The carcass has a moderate covering of flesh considering the kind, class, and part.

(1) The breast has a substantial covering of flesh with the flesh carrying up to the crest of the breastbone sufficiently to prevent a thin appearance.

(2) The leg is fairly thick and wide at the knee and hip joint area, and has sufficient flesh to prevent a thin appearance.

(3) The drumstick has a sufficient amount of flesh to prevent a thin appearance with the flesh carrying fairly well down toward the hock.

(4) The thigh has a sufficient amount of flesh to prevent a thin appearance.

(5) The wing has a sufficient amount of flesh to prevent a thin appearance.

(c) *Fat covering.* The carcass or part has sufficient fat in the skin to prevent a distinct appearance of the flesh through the skin, especially on the breast and legs.

(d) *Defeathering.* The carcass or part may have a few protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, or hairs which are scattered sufficiently so as not to appear numerous.

(e) *Exposed flesh.* A carcass may have exposed flesh provided that no part on the carcass has more than 1/3 of the flesh exposed. A part may have no more than 1/3 of the flesh normally covered by skin exposed.

(f) *Disjointed and broken bones, missing parts, and trimming.*

(1) Parts may be disjointed, but are free of broken bones. The carcass may have two disjointed bones, or one disjointed bone and one nonprotruding broken bone.

(2) Parts of the wing beyond the second joint may be removed at a joint. The tail may be removed at the base.

(3) Slight trimming of the carcass is permitted provided the meat yield of any part on the carcass is not appreciably affected. A moderate amount of meat may be trimmed around the edge of a part to remove defects. The back may be trimmed in an area not wider than the base of the tail to the area halfway between the base of the tail and the hip joints.

(g) *Discolorations of the skin and flesh.*

(1) Discolorations are limited to moderately shaded areas and the carcass or part is free of serious defects. Evidence of incomplete bleeding shall be no more than slight. Discolorations due to flesh bruising shall be free of clots and may not exceed 1/2 the total aggregate area of permitted discoloration.

(2) For a carcass, the aggregate area of all discolorations shall not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1 1/4 in	2 1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	2 in	3 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	2 1/2 in	4 in.
Over 16 lb	None	3 in	5 in.

(3) For a part, the aggregate area of all discolorations for a part shall not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle having a diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	Breast, legs, and parts
None	2 lb	3/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 1/2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	1 3/4 in.

(4) Large carcass parts, specifically halves, front halves, or rear halves, may have areas of discoloration, provided the aggregate area does not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Carcass weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted	
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lb	1 in	1 1/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 1/2 in	1 3/4 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	2 in	2 1/2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	2 1/2 in	3 in.

(h) *Freezing defects.* With respect to consumer packaged poultry, parts, or specified poultry food products, the carcass, part or specified poultry food product may have moderate defects which result from handling or occur during freezing or storage. The skin and flesh shall have a sound appearance, but may lack brightness. The carcass or part may have a few pockmarks due to drying of the inner layer of skin (derma). However, no single area of overlapping pockmarks may exceed that of a circle 1/2 inch in diameter. Moderate areas showing layers of clear pinkish or reddish colored ice are permitted.

(i) *Backs.* B quality backs shall meet all applicable provisions of this section pertaining to parts, and shall include either the meat contained on the ilium (oyster) and meat and skin from the pelvic bones or the vertebral ribs and scapula with meat and skin.

[41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981, and amended at 51 FR 17281, May 9, 1986; 51 FR 18875, May 23, 1986; 51 FR 26224, July 22, 1986; 60 FR 6641, Feb. 2, 1995]

§70.222 C Quality.

(a) A part that does not meet the requirements for A or B quality may be of C quality if the flesh is substantially intact.

(b) A carcass that does not meet the requirements for A or B quality may be C quality. Both wings may be removed or neatly trimmed. Trimming of the breast and legs is permitted, but not to the extent that the normal meat yield is materially affected. The back may be trimmed in an area not wider than the base of the tail and extending from the tail to the area between the hip joints.

(c) C quality backs shall include all the meat and skin from the pelvic bones, except that the meat contained in the ilium (oyster) may be removed. The vertebral ribs and scapula with meat and skin and the backbone located anterior (forward) of the ilia bones may also be removed (front half of back).

[41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976; 41 FR 26565, June 28, 1976. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977 and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981; 51 FR 17282, May 9, 1986]

Standards for Quality of Specified Poultry Food Products

§70.230 Poultry roast -- A Quality.

The standard of quality contained in this section is applicable to raw poultry products labeled in accordance with 9 CFR Part 381 as ready-to-cook "Roasts" or similar descriptive terminology.

(a) The deboned poultry meat used in the preparation of the product shall be from young poultry.

(b) Bones, tendons, cartilage, bruises, and blood clots shall be removed from the meat.

(c) The roast has a clean appearance and is free of protruding pinfeathers, diminutive feathers, and hair.

(d) Skin for covering a roast may include the skin covering the crop area and the neck skin up to the whisker if the fatty blubber, spongy fat, and membranes have been removed from these areas.

(e)(1) Slight discolorations are permitted on the skin or flesh provided the discoloration does not detract from the appearance of the product. Other discolorations are limited to lightly shaded areas of discolorations that do not exceed the total aggregate area of permitted discoloration as described in this section.

(2) The aggregate area of all lightly shaded discolorations for a poultry roast shall not exceed an area equivalent to the area of a circle of the diameter specified in the following table:

Roast weight		Maximum aggregate area permitted
Minimum	Maximum	
None	2 lb	3/4 in.
Over 2 lb	6 lb	1 in.
Over 6 lb	16 lb	1 1/2 in.
Over 16 lb	None	2 in.

(f) Fifty percent or more of the outer surface of the product shall be covered with skin, whether attached to the meat or used as a wrap. Skin covering may overlap without limit in all areas provided the fatty tissue has been removed from the sternal and pectoral feather tracts. The combined weight of the skin and fat used to cover the outer surface and used as a binder shall not exceed 15 percent of the total net weight of the product.

(g) The product shall be fabricated in such a manner that it can be sliced after cooking and each slice can be served with minimal separation.

(h) Seasoning or flavor enhancers, if used, shall be uniformly distributed.

(i) Product shall be fabricated or tied in such a manner that it will retain its shape after defrosting and cooking.

(j) Packaging shall be neat and attractive.

(k) Product shall be practically free of weepage after packaging and/or freezing, and if frozen, shall have a bright, desirable color.

(l) Product packaged in an oven-ready container shall meet all the requirements of the paragraphs in this section, except that with respect to skin covering, the exposed surface of the roast need not be covered with skin. If skin is used to cover the exposed surface, it may be whole or emulsified. Additionally, for roasts packaged in oven-ready containers, comminuted (mechanically deboned) meat may be substituted in part for skin, but may not exceed 8 percent of the total weight of the product.

[41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981, and amended at 51 FR 17282, May 9, 1986; 60 FR 6642, Feb. 2, 1995]

§70.231 Boneless poultry breast, thigh, and tenderloin -- A Quality.

The standards of quality contained in this section are applicable to raw poultry products labeled as ready-to-cook boneless poultry breasts, thighs, or tenderloins, or as ready-to-cook boneless poultry breast fillets or thigh fillets, or with words of similar import.

(a) The breast or thigh shall be cut as specified in AMS §§70.210(e) (1), (2), or (5), respectively.

(b) The bone or bones shall be removed in a neat manner without undue mutilation of adjacent muscle.

(c) With skin, the breast or thigh shall meet A quality requirements for ready-to-cook poultry parts in §§AMS 70.220(d), (e), and (g), and shall be free of tendons and cartilage.

(d) Skinless breasts, thighs, or tenderloins shall be free of cartilage, blood clots, bruises, tendons (except for tenderloins), and discolorations other than slight discolorations, provided they do not detract from the appearance of the product. Minor flesh abrasions due to preparation techniques are permitted.

(e) Trimming is permitted around the outer edges of whole breasts, half breasts, and thighs provided the trimming results in at least 1/4 of the breast or 1/2 of the thigh remaining intact and further, must result in a portion that approximates the same symmetrical appearance of the original part. Trimming must result in a smooth outer surface with no angular cuts, tears, or holes in the meat portion of the product. Trimming of the inner muscle surface is permitted provided it results in a relatively smooth appearance.

[41 FR 23681, June 11, 1976. Redesignated at 42 FR 32514, June 27, 1977, and at 46 FR 63203, Dec. 31, 1981, and amended at 51 FR 17282, May 9, 1986; 60 FR 6642, Feb. 2, 1995]

§70.232 Skinless carcasses and parts -- A Quality.

The standards of quality contained in this section are applicable to raw ready-to-cook whole poultry carcasses and parts.

(a) The parts shall be cut as specified in AMS §70.210.

(b) The skin shall be removed in a manner without undue mutilation of adjacent muscle. Minor flesh abrasions due to preparation techniques are permitted.

(c) Skinless carcasses or parts shall meet A quality ready-to-cook requirements as outlined in AMS §§70.220(a), (b), (f), and (g).

[60 FR 6642, Feb. 2, 1995]

United States Grades for Ready-to-Cook Poultry and Specified Poultry Food Products

§70.240 General.

(a) All terms in the United States standards for quality set forth in AMS §§70.210 through 70.232 shall, when used in AMS §§70.240 through 70.252, have the same meaning as when used in said standards.

(b) The United States Grades for ready-to-cook poultry and specified poultry food products are applicable to poultry of the kinds and classes set forth in AMS 70.200 through 70.206 when used as described in paragraphs (c) and (d) of this section.

(c) United States Consumer Grades for ready-to-cook poultry and specified poultry food products may be assigned only when

(1) each carcass, part, or poultry food product, including those used in preparing a poultry food product, has been graded in an unfrozen state on an individual basis by a grader or by an authorized person pursuant to 7 CFR Part 70.20(c) and thereafter checkgraded by a grader;

(2) applicable poultry food product has been prepared under the supervision of a grader; and

(3) identified in an unfrozen state.

[51 FR 17282, May 9, 1986; 60 FR 6642, Feb. 2, 1995]

United States Consumer Grades for Ready-to-Cook Poultry and Specified Poultry Food Products

§70.250 U.S. Grade A.

A lot of ready-to-cook poultry, parts, or poultry food products consisting of one or more ready-to-cook carcasses or parts, or individual units of poultry food products of the same kind and class, each of which conforms to the requirements for A quality may be designated as U.S. Grade A.

§70.251 U.S. Grade B.

A lot of ready-to-cook poultry or parts consisting of one or more ready-to-cook carcasses or parts of the same kind and class, each of which conforms to the requirements for B quality or better may be designated as U.S. Grade B.

§70.252 U.S. Grade C.

A lot of ready-to-cook poultry or parts consisting of one or more ready-to-cook carcasses or parts of the same kind and class, each of which conforms to the requirements for C quality or better, may be designated as U.S. Grade C.

Ready-to-Cook Poultry - A Quality

Effective March 6, 1995

Summary of Specifications for Standards of Quality for Individual Carcasses and Parts

(Not All Inclusive) (Minimum Requirements and Maximum Defects Permitted)

		A Quality				
Conformation: Breastbone Back Legs and Wings		Normal Slight curve or dent Slight curve Normal				
Fleshing:		Well fleshed, considering kind and class				
Fat Covering:		Well developed layer -- especially between heavy feather tracts				
Defeathering: Protruding pinfeathers, Diminutive feathers, and Hairs		Free				
Exposed Flesh: ¹ Weight Range		Carcass		Large Carcass Parts ² (halves, front and rear halves)		Other Parts ²
Minimum	Maximum	Breast and Legs	Elsewhere	Breast and Legs	Elsewhere	
None	2 lbs.	1/4 in.	1 in.	1/4 in.	1/2 in.	1/4 in.
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	1/4 in.	1 1/2 in.	1/4 in.	3/4 in.	1/4 in.
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	1/2 in.	2 in.	1/2 in.	1 in.	1/2 in.
Over 16 lbs.	None	1/2 in.	3 in.	1/2 in.	1 1/2 in.	1/2 in.
Discolorations: Carcass		Lightly Shaded			Moderately Shaded ³	
		Breast and Legs	Elsewhere on carcass		Hock of leg	Elsewhere on carcass
None	2 lbs.	3/4 in.	1 1/4 in.		1/4 in.	5/8 in.
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	1 in.	2 in.		1/2 in.	1 in.
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	1 1/2 in.	2 1/2 in.		3/4 in.	1 1/4 in.
Over 16 lbs.	None	2 in.	3 in.		1 in.	1 1/2 in.
Discolorations: Large Carcass Parts (halves, front and rear halves)		Lightly Shaded			Moderately Shaded ³	
		Breast and Legs	Elsewhere		Hock of leg	Elsewhere
None	2 lbs.	1/2 in.	1 in.		1/4 in.	1/2 in.
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	3/4 in.	1 1/2 in.		3/8 in.	3/4 in.
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	1 in.	2 in.		1/2 in.	1 in.
Over 16 lbs.	None	1 1/4 in.	2 1/2 in.		5/8 in.	1 1/4 in.
Discolorations: Other Parts		Lightly Shaded			Moderately Shaded ³	
None	2 lbs.	1/2 in.			1/4 in.	
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	3/4 in.			3/8 in.	
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	1 in.			1/2 in.	
Over 16 lbs.	None	1 1/4 in.			5/8 in.	
Disjointed and Broken Bones:		Carcass--1 disjointed and no broken bones. Parts--Thighs with back portion, legs, or leg quarters may have femur disjointed from the hip joint. Other parts--none.				
Missing Parts:		Wing tips and tail. In ducks and geese, the parts of the wing beyond the second joint may be removed if removed at the joint and both wings are so treated. Tail may be removed at base.				
Freezing Defects:		Slight darkening on back and drumstick. Overall bright appearance. Occasional pock marks due to drying. Occasional small areas of clear, pinkish, or reddish colored ice.				
¹ Maximum aggregate area of all exposed flesh. In addition, the carcass or part may have cuts or tears that do not expand or significantly expose flesh, provided the aggregate length of all such cuts and tears does not exceed a length tolerance equal to the permitted dimensions listed above.						
² For all parts, trimming of skin along the edge is allowed, provided at least 75 percent of the normal skin cover associated with the part remains attached, and the remaining skin uniformly covers the outer surface and does not detract from the appearance of part.						
³ Moderately shaded discolorations and discolorations due to flesh bruising are free of clots and limited to areas other than the breast and legs except for the area adjacent to the hock						

Ready-to-Cook Poultry - B Quality

Effective March 6, 1995

Summary of Specifications for Standards of Quality for Individual Carcasses and Parts

(Not All Inclusive) (Minimum Requirements and Maximum Defects Permitted)

		B Quality	
Conformation:		Moderate deformities	
Breastbone		Moderately dented, curved, or crooked	
Back		Moderately crooked	
Legs and Wings		Moderately misshapen	
Fleshing:		Moderately fleshed, considering kind and class.	
Fat Covering:		Sufficient fat layer--especially on breast and legs.	
Defeathering: Protruding pinfeathers, Diminutive feathers, and Hairs		Few scattered	
Exposed Flesh:			
Weight Range		Carcass	Parts
Minimum	Maximum		
None	2 lbs.	No part on the carcass (wings, legs, entire back, or entire breast) has more than 1/3 of the flesh exposed	No more than 1/3 of flesh normally covered by skin exposed
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.		
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.		
Over 16 lbs.	None		
Discolorations: ¹		Carcass	
Carcass		Lightly or Moderately Shaded Discolorations	
		Breast and Legs	Elsewhere on Carcass
None	2 lbs.	1 1/4 in.	2 1/4 in.
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	2 in.	3 in.
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	2 1/2 in.	4 in.
Over 16 lbs.	None	3 in.	5 in.
Discolorations: ¹		Large Carcass Parts	
Large Carcass Parts (halves, front or rear halves)		Lightly or Moderately Shaded Discolorations	
		Breast and Legs	Elsewhere
None	2 lbs.	1 in.	1 1/4 in.
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	1 1/2 in.	1 3/4 in.
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	2 in.	2 1/2 in.
Over 16 lbs.	None	2 1/2 in.	3 in.
Discolorations: ¹		Other Parts	
Other Parts		Lightly or Moderately Shaded Discolorations	
		Breasts, Legs, and Parts	
None	2 lbs.	3/4 in.	
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.	1 in.	
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.	1 1/2 in.	
Over 16 lbs.	None	1 3/4 in.	
Disjointed and Broken Bones:		Carcass--2 disjointed and no broken bones, or 1 disjointed and 1 nonprotruding broken bone. Parts--may be disjointed, no broken bones; wing beyond second joint may be removed at a joint.	
Missing Parts:		Wing tips, 2nd wing joint and tail.	
Trimming:		Carcass	Parts
		Slight trimming of the carcass is permitted provided the meat yield of any part on the carcass is not appreciably affected. The back may be trimmed in an area not wider than the base of the tail to the area halfway between the base of the tail and the hip joints.	A moderate amount of meat may be trimmed around the edge of a part to remove defects.
Freezing Defects:		May lack brightness. Few pockmarks due to drying. Moderate areas showing a layer of clear, pinkish, or reddish colored ice.	
¹ Discolorations due to flesh bruising shall be free of clots and may not exceed one-half the total aggregate area of permitted discoloration.			

Ready-to-Cook Poultry - C Quality

Effective March 6, 1995

Summary of Specifications for Standards of Quality for Individual Carcasses and Parts

(Not All Inclusive) (Minimum Requirements and Maximum Defects Permitted)

		C Quality	
Conformation:		Abnormal	
Breastbone		Seriously curved or crooked	
Back		Seriously crooked	
Legs and Wings		Misshapen	
Fleshing:		Poorly fleshed.	
Fat Covering:		Lacking in fat covering over all parts of carcass.	
Defeathering: Protruding pinfeathers, Diminutive feathers, and Hairs		Scattering	
Exposed Flesh: Weight Range		Carcass	Parts
Minimum	Maximum		
None	2 lbs.	No limit	
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.		
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.		
Over 16 lbs.	None		
Discolorations:		Carcass	
Carcass		Breast and Legs	Elsewhere on Carcass
None	2 lbs.	No limit on size, number of areas, or intensity of discolorations and flesh bruises if such areas do not render any part of the carcass unfit for food.	
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.		
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.		
Over 16 lbs.	None		
Discolorations:		Parts	
Parts (includes large carcass parts)		Breasts, Legs, and Parts	
None	2 lbs.	No limit on size, number of areas, or intensity of discolorations and flesh bruises if such areas do not render any part unfit for food.	
Over 2 lbs.	6 lbs.		
Over 6 lbs.	16 lbs.		
Over 16 lbs.	None		
Disjointed and Broken Bones:		No limit	
Missing Parts:		Wing tips, wings, and tails. Backs shall include all meat and skin from pelvic bones, except that the meat contained in the ilium (oyster) may be removed. The vertebral ribs and scapula with meat and skin and the backbone located anterior (forward) of ilia bones may also be removed (front half of back).	
Trimming:		Carcass	Parts
		Trimming of the breast and legs is permitted, but not to the extent that the normal meat yield is materially affected.	
		The back may be trimmed in an area not wider than the base of the tail and extending from the tail to the area between the hip joints.	
Freezing Defects:		Numerous pockmarks and large dried areas.	